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THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS.

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده و نصلی علی رسوله الکریم

The Teachings of Krishna.

We must confess in the very beginning that the present enquiry into the true teachings of the greatest man that ancient India has produced, is not based on original Sanskrit sources. We depend simply upon English translations, but having before us, on the one hand, the works of the staunch believers in Krishna, and on the other, those of the sceptical Europeans who have with immense pains explored the vast Sanskrit literature, it would be quite true to say that we possess the necessary information on the subject which we are handling. Between the two parties standing on the two extremes, *viz.*, the Hindus who believe that every word of the innumerable ancient Indian writings on the life and teachings of Krishna is a revelation and that he was in fact the Lord of the universe, and the Europeans who declare Krishna to be a myth, there has no doubt sprung up a third class of enquiring men who take him for what he actually was, a great religious reformer of ancient India, and who admit that the stories of his life and teachings contain some facts mixed with a good deal of fiction, but still we think justice has not been done to this great man, and the errors of later introduction have not been as yet separated from the truth which he taught. This we attempt to do, though very briefly, in the following pages.

The teachings of Krishna are contained in the Bhagavad Gita, an episode in the Mahabharta. We are not concerned with the question of its date. It may be as old as the 15th century B. C. as Dhirendra Nath Paul attempts to show, or it may be as recent as the 3rd century A. C. as John Davies has shown. One thing is certain, *viz.*, that it was written long after the time of Krishna, while it is equally

true that it has been receiving additions and alterations from time to time. Thus Paul says in the introduction to his Life and Teachings of Krishna: "The present Mahavarta itself says in the Adi Parva,—'Vyasa originally compiled the Bharta, exclusive of Episodes, in twenty-four thousand *Slokas*.' But the present Mahavarta contains instead of twenty-four thousand *Slokas*, no less than 107,390 *Slokas*. It contains a table of contents, instead of 150 *Slokas*, of no less than 268 *Slokas*. This is a clear indication that many thousand *Slokas* have been added to the original Mahavarta in the course of many thousand years." And again: "When it was recited by Ugrasrava in the Naimisha forest, it had even then gone through some additions and alterations, and a difference of opinion had already arisen about the various readings of its text." From these quotations it is clear that leaving apart the alterations which the teachings of Krishna must have undergone in oral transmission, they could not escape alterations and interpolations when reduced to writing in the Bhagavad Gita. If there are sufficient reasons for not admitting any doctrine laid down in the Gita, as the teaching of Krishna, we shall have to reject it as an error introduced after his time.

Anyone who is acquainted with the history of the Hindu religion will be astonished to find that in the Gita he is transported into quite a different region. Krishna's conception of the Divine Being is so high that it cannot be traced to any ideas current in his own time or among his own people. We do not deny that the doctrine of Divine Unity may have been preached to the Hindus at an earlier time or in the Vedas, but this doctrine, if it was ever taught, was hidden at the time of Krishna's appearance under element-worship and the acknowledgment of various gods and goddesses, as the Vedas in their present form abundantly prove, and the philosophical systems of Hinduism had introduced many other errors with regard to the Divine attributes. Not only had the truth been buried under a lifeless ceremonial, but even the supreme Deity was neglected for the minor gods to whom different functions and different degrees of power were ascribed by their worshippers. Krishna found the Hindus involved in this state of darkness and ignorance at the time of his appearance. The Gita bears witness to this spiritual degradation of the Hindus. Thus in the fourth chapter we find the following statement: "For, whenever piety

decays, O Son of Bharata! and impiety is in the ascendant, then I produce myself. For the protection of good men, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the re-establishment of piety, I am born from age to age." (iv, 7, 8). As the prophets of God are the images and manifestations of the Divine Being, hence their coming into the world is described as the advent of God Himself. It should also be noted that the two offices which Krishna ascribes to himself here are the protection of good men and the destruction of evil-doers. Thus also with regard to his last appearance at the end of *Kali-yoga*, it is said that he would destroy the wicked and protect the righteous. It is to these two functions that the two titles of the Promised Messiah revealed to him long since when he was addressed as Krishna refer, and thus it is that his praise is written in the Gita as one of his revelations says.

In short, Krishna found the Hindus involved in serious errors not only in practice but also in doctrine, and he taught them the truth in both matters. He laid great stress upon Unity and inculcated the worship of one God to the exclusion of all minor deities which the Hindus worshipped. "In his view," writes Mr. Davies in his introduction to the translation of Gita, "the Supreme Being is one, without a rival, without such attributes as were assigned to the gods in the popular belief, and unstained by any of their passions and vices." Consider the following verses of the Gita in which other gods beside God are condemned: "Of these, the wise man, ever devout, who worships the One, is the most excellent" (vii, 17). "They, whose knowledge has been carried away by lusts of any kind go to other gods, using diverse rites, constrained by their own nature" (vii, 20). "A full assurance of blessedness I bring to those who worship Me and never seek refuge in another god, who are ever united to Me in devotion" (ix, 22). "They who are devoted by vows to gods, go to gods; they who devote themselves to Pitris (ancestral, manes), go to Pitris; they who sacrifice to Bhutas (malignant goblins), go to Bhutas; they who worship Me alone, come to Me" (ix, 25). More than this, the doctrine of Unity which he teaches, is not a surface doctrine which he could learn from such superficial knowledge as a man might receive externally or from the working of his own mind. He dives deep into the spirit of Unity and soars high up into the

spiritual regions, far above the level of his time. "Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest in sacrifice or givest, whatever austerity thou practisest, do it as an offering to Me" (ix, 27). There cannot be the least doubt that these teachings came from a higher than a mortal source. In fact, their sublimity and the ignorance of the age in which Krishna lived, falsify every supposition except that he received them as an inspiration from the Divine Being. Such high spiritual teachings could not proceed from any other source.

It is not only with respect to Divine unity that the teachings of Krishna rise so high. His whole conception of the Divine Being is a very sublime one. According to him, God is the holiest of the holy, and the eternal creative power. He is "the source of all the universe," (vii, 6), "the source of all things" from whom "the whole universe proceeds" (x, 8), "the supreme Brahma, the supreme abode, the best purification, the eternal Creator, Divine First of gods, Unborn, the Lord" (x, 12), "Creator of all things, Lord of all, the God of gods, Ruler of the universe" (x, 15), "the Imperishable, Unseen, Unmanifested one, All-pervading and Incomprehensible and Eternal" (xii, 3). The conception of the Divine Being as a Creator of the universe, bespeaks with certainty a Divine origin of the words of Krishna, for all the philosophical systems of Hinduism, of which the Arya Samaj is a modern representative, have been involved in the serious error that God is not the creator of the universe. Though the teachings of Krishna have not been preserved to us in their true and original purity, yet in that which is handed down to us, we see clear signs of the doctrine that he believed in the Divine attribute of creation.

The only thing that can be said against the sublimity of the conception of God in the Gita, is the doctrine of incarnation there taught, and the attribution to Krishna of the assumption of Divine power. But we are, by no means, prepared to attribute these teachings to Krishna. History tells us that no man with a head upon his shoulders ever claimed to be God, and that men have always been made gods after they ceased to live. The idea of the deification of a man gradually gains ground as a great man slides away into the hazy past. No sane man while walking upon this earth ever claimed,

or was seriously taken, to be a God. It is only when he passes away into the twilight of history that his figure becoming more and more dim gradually enlarges in the eye of the beholder and that the hero is converted into a God. So it happened with Christ and so also with Krishna. There exists to this day some evidence of the gradual development of the idea of Krishna-worship. "The Vishnavas," we are told by Dr. Davies, "promoted his claim, but it was affirmed by many that he was only a man; for in the Bhishma Parvan it is said: 'Whoever says that he (Krishna) was a mere man is of dull intellect.' If, in some few passages he is represented as being the origin of all things these are so contrary to the general tone of the poem on this subject that, with Dr. Muir, we are compelled to assume that they are late interpolations. It is not until we come to the Puranas that he appears as the Supreme Deity beyond all doubt or cavil, and the earliest of these books, the Vayu Purana, has, by general consent, no higher antiquity than the sixth century A. C." Moreover, it appears from other parts of the Mahabharta that Krishna himself offered worship to Mahadeva. Similarly we are told in another book called "Drona-Parvan" that Krishna and Argin bowed their heads to the ground before the Supreme Being.*

Leaving aside the tendency of the Hindus to creature-worship from the earliest times to which their history can be traced, it is easy to see that the words of a prophet who speaks as the mouthpiece of the Divine Being can be easily misconstrued. For instance, in the whole of the Holy Quran, the person speaking is Almighty God, yet all these words came from the mouth of the Holy Prophet. But it would be a fatal error to ascribe to the Holy Prophet, the powers and attributes which are ascribed by the Holy Quran to Almighty God. Some such mistake could have easily occurred in the case of Krishna. When he said, for instance, "I am the source of all things, the whole universe proceeds from me," he was speaking only as a mouthpiece of the Divine Being. The "I" here is Almighty God Himself who is the true speaker and not Krishna who is only the mouthpiece. Moreover, Krishna denounces in emphatic terms the worship of other gods and enjoins only the worship of the Supreme Being. Now among the "other gods," all those men are also included who were

*Vide Davies p. 190.

taken for gods. How could a sensible man denounce the worship of other mortals who were looked upon as gods and then present himself as an *Avatar* to be worshipped. With the exception of one Being only, all others for whom pretensions of Divinity were put forward, are hateful to Krishna. "They whose knowledge has been carried away by lusts of any kind, go to other gods." Now all these purely monotheistic teachings are strangely inconsistent with the idea of a man-god. We should not be misunderstood. We do not mean to say that the Gita is free from this error. It does ascribe to Krishna the teaching that he was God-incarnate, but there is the clearest internal evidence of the other portions of the Gita itself, that it is a later interpolation and that Krishna is by no means responsible for this error. It is impossible that a man who lays stress upon Divine Unity and denounces the worship of any god besides the one Supreme Being, should lay claim to Godhead. It is an error of which the holy Krishna ought to be cleared. In fact, the very idea of incarnation is inconsistent with the mission of a true prophet of God. He comes to impart spirituality to the world which is involved in gross materialism. But with the growth of materialism, which again gains ground when a prophet's spiritual teachings are lost sight of, the conception of God undergoes a similar change. Thus it would be seen that in every religious movement, where a man has been made a God, the idea of incarnation is of a later origin. The Gita itself says: "The foolish think that I, the Unmanifested, am endowed with a manifest form." Here the doctrine of incarnation is plainly rejected.

Another objectionable doctrine taught in the Gita and ascribed to Krishna is the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. We have, therefore, to see if this doctrine is consistent with the other doctrines taught by Krishna. The doctrine of transmigration requires, on the one hand, that God should not be the Creator of souls, and, on the other, that salvation should be temporary. This is too clear a fact to need any discussion. Now both these doctrines do not find any place in the Gita so far as we have read it. It has already been shown that Krishna sincerely believed and taught that Almighty God was the Creator of all things and the source of the whole universe and that it was from Him that everything proceeded. The teachings on this point are too clear, and great emphasis has been laid upon it. Therefore, we would be guilty of the gravest injustice in

ascribing to Krishna any doctrine which is contradicted by this plain and sensible teaching. The acknowledgment of the Divine attribute of creation runs throughout the Gita, and therefore a statement occuring once or twice that the soul never began to be, must be regarded as an interpolation. True salvation also, according to Krishna, is eternal. "He whose soul is unattached to outward contacts, finds happiness in himself; his soul joined by devotion to Brahma, enjoys eternal blessedness; for the pleasures that are born of these contacts are the wombs of pain: they begin and end, O son of Kunti! not in them the wise man delights" (v: 21, 22). "For supreme happiness come to the Yogin whose heart is at rest, in whom passion is tranquilised, who is one with Brahma, and free from sin. The Yogin ever thus uniting his soul (to Brahma), who has ceased from sin, enjoys easily the boundless happiness of union with Brahma" (vi: 27, 28). Some men think that Krishna speaks of two kinds of salvation, a temporary salvation and a permanent salvation. Salvation, it will be admitted, means a state of freedom from sin and union with God. It is taken in the same sense in the Gita. Therefore, a temporary salvation should mean, if it has any significance at all, a temporary state of freedom from sin and a temporary union with God. Krishna does not hold the view that men attain to such a state. According to his view the union with God, the Supreme Being, is a union which lasts for ever, as is evident from the above quotations. Yet he speaks of the enjoyments of even those who go to other gods, enjoyments of which they are soon deprived. In the Gita these too are called the enjoyments of heaven. This, however, is not the true and real heaven, but it is the lower heaven, the heaven of Indra and other gods whose worship Krishna so forcibly denounces. These enjoyments are not, therefore, the true heavenly enjoyments, nor can this state be called a state of salvation. To ascertain the nature of these enjoyments, we again refer to the Gita. "Following the three Holy Books (the Vedas) and desiring the objects of the senses, they obtain that which comes and goes. A full assurance of blessedness I bring to those who worship Me and never seek refuge in another (god), who are ever united to Me in devotion" (ix: 21, 22). Here the nature of these temporary enjoyments is clearly described. Though following the sacred books, these men are yet slaves to their passions and desires. They do not

worship God, but seek the refuge of other gods. They cannot, therefore, be purified from sins, nor can they have any union with God, and hence they cannot attain to the state of salvation which man aspires to. They have pleasure which "comes and goes" and this cannot be the heavenly bliss which a true worshipper of God obtains by union in Him. It is, therefore, the false satisfaction which the worshipper of false gods may have for a time but of which he is soon deprived, because his support is frail. The god he trusts is nothing, and so his pleasure too, which he may have for a time, but which he ultimately finds changed into grief and sorrow. Thus further on the Gita says: "But these men know Me not in truth, and therefore they fall. They who are devoted by vows to gods, go to gods; ..... they who worship Me alone, come to Me." Elsewhere it is said that they who are carried away by their lusts, go to other gods. Their state is not, therefore, a state of salvation at all. They are deceived and the heaven they think they have attained to, is really a hell. "For the pleasures that are born of these contacts are the wombs of pain" (v: 22).

From what we have said above, it is clear that Krishna does not teach a temporary salvation at all. With him the way of obtaining salvation is the true Islamic way. A sinful man is not debarred from heaven if he purifies his soul, and in this there is a wide departure from the common Hindu view which sticks to the doctrine of transmigration. "Even if one of evil life worships Me with exclusive worship, he must be accounted as a good man, for he has judged rightly. Soon he becomes a pious man and attains to eternal peace. Be well assured, O Son of Kunti! that he who worships Me, does not perish. For they who find refuge in Me, O Son of Pritha! though they have been conceived in sin, women too, Vaisyas and even Sudras, these go to the highest way" (ix: 30-32). This strikes at the root of the doctrine of Transmigration, for according to it a sinful man cannot obtain salvation unless he has gone through an innumerable series of births, nor can a woman attain to this height.

In fact, the ultimate object of the teachings of every prophet of God as well as its means of attainment are the same. Since Almighty God revealed His word to man, He has pointed out only one way of salvation and that is the purification of the soul. It is upon this

that every prophet of God has laid stress, and it is by acting upon this principle that any good can proceed to humanity. This remarkable resemblance between the teachings of men who have appeared in different countries and diffrent ages, shows clearly that these teachings are all drawn from the same source, a source far above the human resources which they could draw upon. Wrong inferences have also been deduced from these resemblances. For instance, the Christian missionaries have made attempts to establish an actual connection between the teachings of Krishna and Christ. They try to prove that the former borrowed from the latter and this on the basis of a certain similarity between the ideas expressed by them. They think the power of God to be so limited that He could not reveal His will to any people save the Israelites, or through any person except Jesus Christ. And if the question comes to borrowing, why should it not be said that Jesus borrowed from the teachings of Krishna? But the fact is that to every nation God gave a guidance, but for which it could not have stepped out of a state of savageness. Krishna was sent to the Hindus and he taught them what other prophets taught the people to whom they were sent, *viz.*, an entire submission to the will of God, the subduing of passions and carnal desires and the purification of the soul. Such is the teaching of Krishna. Errors have no doubt crept into it, but it was necessary that it should have so happened, for it had been foretold that a time would come when people would forget the true teachings of Krishna and evil would spread upon the earth, and that the spiritual manifestation of Krishna would appear in the last ages to remove these errors. All these promises have come to fulfilment, and blessed are they who knowing the messenger of God, follow the truth, for they would inherit eternal bliss.

Like the Christians some Muhammadans also rashly deny that Krishna was a prophet or that a prophet was ever sent to the Hindus. The Holy Quran tells us in clear words that before the appearance of the Holy Prophet, a prophet was sent to every people. It also tells us that there are prophets which it has not mentioned. When we see, therefore, how the Christians corrupted the teachings of Jesus Christ in the near past, it is not improbable, nay it appears to be certain, that with the lapse of time many errors found their way

into the pure and divine teachings of Krishna. If it is difficult to recognise Jesus Christ as a true prophet from the erroneous teachings ascribed to him, it is much more difficult to find out Krishna from the midst of errors which have been introduced into his teachings. But the fact remains, in spite of these difficulties, that there are noble sentiments expressed in the teachings of Krishna which cannot be ascribed to any but a Divine source. The few quotations from the Gita which we have given above, amply bear out this statement. We would revert to this subject later on, if necessary.

Advanced Muhammadans.

This name may be a little misleading, but we have been obliged to use it for want of a more descriptive name. By "Advanced Muhammadans," we do not mean all educated Muhammadans, not even the majority of them, but a very small minority, men, who can, so to say, be counted upon one's fingers, who are agitating the idea of separation from their more orthodox brethren and of the formation of a new sect of Islam upon what are wrongly deemed to be the principles of western civilization. There has no doubt been, as it ought to have been, a strong re-action against the superstition and deplorable ignorance of older days, but unfortunately the re-actionary movement has not been guided by sound principles in its encroachments upon the sphere of religion, which is due partly to an ignorance of the true Islamic principles, and partly to the hatred excited by false religious leaders. The horrid picture of diabolic deeds done under the cloak of piety has turned some men away in disgust from every thing connected with the name of religion, and they have thus gone from one extreme to the other. Pseudo-philosophical views have struck at the root of faith, and though there is yet an outward adherence to the doctrine, the practice belies even this.

The lines upon which the new movement is to be conducted, are not yet finally determined. One man advocates only a reform in certain social institutions having religious sanction, polygamy and *purda* being the most prominent of them. Another is desirous of introducing certain reforms in religious practices by changing the forms of prayers

fasting, *zakát* and pilgrimage. But the greatest "advance" which has recently been made is a bold proposal for a wholesale rejection of the Medina *Suras* involving an abolition of almost the whole of the law of Islam. All these are as yet individual proposals and they have been received with the greatest disfavor by the Muslim public. The proposal for the formation of a new sect on the basis of some of these principles, is also an individual attempt, and so far as we are aware, no one has responded to the call. The avowed object of all these proposals is the betterment of the Muhammadan people, and in this, we think, the advocates of these principles are greatly mistaken. A very prominent feature of this movement that must strike a deep observer, is the great inconsistency of those who advocate the so-called advanced views, and so the one thing that is needed for the advancement of a people is conspicuous by its absence. The one thing needed is that our lives should be in harmony with our professions, and it is exactly here that our "advanced" brethren disappoint us. Perhaps such a statement may excite their indignation, but if they observe minutely their own courses of life, its truth cannot but strike them. Not to go into details which may perhaps appear offensive, we may ask if they act upon the new principles which they advocate. For instance, it is suggested as one of the principles upon which cultured Muhammadans should act that prayers should be said in a language familiar to the worshipper and not in Arabic as is hitherto done by the Muhammadans. But the question is if this is acted upon, if those who advocate this principle have true love and reverence for prayers, but are only averse to their being said in an unfamiliar language. In plainer words, do our "advanced" brethren say prayers at all, be it in English or in Urdu? The truth is, and we beg to be excused for stating it, that their aversion is not to any particular language in which prayers are said, but to prayers themselves. For, it is hard to believe that while so zealous for the cause of higher education, they want the Muhammadan community to be kept particularly ignorant of the Arabic language. Is there any particular reason that while we should devote the whole of our lives to the study of the English language, and make it the medium of the communication of our ideas, Arabic should be entirely neglected or utterly excluded from our curriculum? We do not mean to say that English education should be neglected, but that along with it we should make a progress in

the study of Arabic language and literature, and that the one should be made as compulsory as the other. If there are treasures of knowledge in the English language, there are richer treasures still in the unexplored field of Arabic literature.

This is, however, only a digression. All that we wish to impress is that some thing should be *done* first by the advocates of the new doctrines. They should show us first, that they are true and earnest lovers of prayers, and only want them to be said in a language which they know. In like manner, there is a clamour for the break-up of *purda*, but has any one taken a single step in this direction? Not that such instances would tend in any way to the welfare of the Muslim community. We believe and are sure that the abolition of the *purda*, so far as it is required by the Muslim Law and not as that injunction is abused at present, would bring about immense harm and mischief to the Muhammadan society, as it has brought to the most advanced society of the present day. If our opinion in this matter is considered to be prejudicial and not based on facts, any impartial Christian writer may be consulted and he will vouch the truth of the statement that in respect of chastity the European society does by no means stand at the top, if it does not stand at the bottom. In a lecture on the "Civilization of Christendom" delivered at South Place Chapel, Finsbury, Bosanquet remarked several years ago, and his words convey a truth which cannot be questioned by any but the blindly prejudiced: "I am not alluding to comparative statistics, for example, about soberness and chastity,—if any of the so-called heathen are really worse than we in these matters, they must be very bad indeed." As great a Christian dignitary as the Archbishop of Canterbury confesses that "the streets of London fling temptation broadcast before youth and inexperience." Are not these temptations the result of a too free intermingling of the two sexes, and is it not necessary to put a check to these? Turning to the main subject again, the question is, why are the advocates of the dissolution of the *purda* system so inconsistent, and why can they not gather up courage to act upon what they teach. Is it not due to the fact that at heart they do not regard such a step to be beneficial to themselves and to their society? Several years ago, a young Muhammadan Barrister, coming fresh from England, introduced the subject of *purda* in a Young Men's

Association. In his excitement for its removal and the alleged freedom of woman, he was met by the cool response that it was better for him to set an example than talk too much. There the question stopped, and at that very point the young barrister has stopped to this day. There is a similar inconsistency in regard to the vehement preaching against the Inheritance laws of Islam. So far as we are aware, none of the zealous advocates of primogeniture has hitherto forgone his share for the sake of his elder brother, though he might have stood in greater need of it than himself.

That is only one aspect of the new movement in embryo. In this respect at least our "advanced" brethren have made no advance upon the ignorant portion of the Muhammadan community. In the matter of superstition too, no great advancement is to be observed. There is, no doubt, a great change in the object of superstition, but that is of little use. If the "ignorant" Muhammadans are to be blamed for an excessive reverence for tombs and miracles of saints, the "advanced" Muhammadans have a blind admiration for every thing Western. The true spirit of enquiry has not yet been fostered, and this is the reason of the condemnation of the principles which are the greatest boons to society. Institutions which do not in any way interfere with advancement in science, art, politics or philosophy, and which are highly beneficial to society from another point of view, are supposed to be the causes of the decline of Muhammadan civilization and of the present backwardness of that people. But it is not shown what is the connection between the cause and its alleged effect. It should have also been proved that such institutions, polygamy, *purda* and divorce, for instance, have in all ages and under all circumstances been causes of the degeneration of the people among whom they were prevalent, and that their absence has similarly always been productive of civilization and advancement in sciences and arts. It should have been shown that where there were two nations placed under the same circumstances in all respects, except in polygamy and *purda*, the existence of these institutions hindered the progress of one society, while their absence was the real factor in the progress of the other. Such instances and facts, if there were any, should have been first collected, and then on their basis a general conclusion should have been drawn. If such an attempt had been made, it would have

been seen that these institutions could not be blamed for the present degeneration of the Muhammadan people, and that it is the greatest error to assign the backwardness of the Muslims to their existence, or the advancement of the Christian nations to their absence. For in this way the real causes of advancement are all neglected and it is ascribed to circumstances with which it has absolutely no connection. The idea which has occurred to our "advanced" brethren, has never occurred to any of the learned European writers on the Western civilization, *viz.*, that it was due to the absence of the institutions of polygamy and divorce. If these are really "advanced" views, then Europe is certainly still in a backward condition. It is quite a different thing that Europeans have objections to the Islamic institution of polygamy, but no sane person ever thought of ascribing the marvellous progress of the European nations in the material world to the prohibition of polygamy. In fact, if this reasoning is true, then another assertion must also claim the support of our "advanced" co-religionists, *viz.*, that the prohibition of pork, wine and gambling and the rejection of the doctrine of God-in-flesh has brought about the decay of Muhammadan civilization, while their permission and a belief in the Divinity of a man has been an important factor, if not the only important factor, in raising the West to the height of civilization which it occupies at the present time. And the next step in the so-called advancement of the Muhammadans would, in that case, be that a proposal would be advanced to raise these unnecessary restrictions as is now done to stop what are alleged to be the unnecessary, licenses of polygamy and divorce. We are sorry for the wrong direction which the genius of our "advanced" friends has taken.

To those who study the history of the rise of Islam and Christianity, one circumstance in the growth of the two people would always appear very striking. It is a patent fact that Christianity was introduced into the world at a time when the Roman civilization, the most advanced civilization of the ancient world, was at the zenith, and further that it was among the subjects of the Roman empire that Christianity made its first conquests. It is also a fact that with the growth and spread of the Christian doctrines, the Roman civilization began gradually to decay. On the other hand, Islam took its birth and

rise among a people who were yet in a state of barbarism. Other nations of the earth were also at that time involved in darkness and ignorance, and every civilization of the ancient world had already decayed. And further, with the progress of Islam, a new day of civilization dawned upon the world. Its holy influence was cast, not only upon the Arabs, but upon every people in the midst of whom it was planted. Thus a remarkable contrast is brought to view in the rise and progress of these two religions so far as their relations with the external world are concerned. There is another set of facts equally important. So long as the dogmas of Christianity remained in the ascendant, the people among whom it was predominant, remained involved in barbarism, but when its peculiar doctrines began to lose their hold over the minds of men, the world again witnessed the light of civilization. In fact it was during the last century that the Christian world made any progress which raised it above all ancient civilizations, while it was during the same period that Christian belief suffered most heavily and that its dogmas lost ground. In contrast with this state of facts again, the Muhammadan civilization began to decay exactly at the time when the Muslims neglected the principles of Islam, and this has happened in every country where it prevailed and which it once raised to the height of civilization.

This remarkable contrast is based on facts which no one can deny, and it brings to light the essential difference between the Muhammadan and the alleged Christian civilizations. It is not a chance coincidence that civilization began to decay with the rise of Christianity or that it began to rise with its decline. Nor is it an insignificant fact that with the advance of Islam civilization made an advancement, and that with the diminishing of its influence it also began to decay. It is a misstatement that the Muhammadan civilization stopped at a certain stage in its onward course because of any defect in its principles. It was not due to any defect in the principles or institutions of Islam that the civilization of the Muhammadan people was brought to a standstill or that it began to decay, but to the neglect of those principles and the abuse of those institutions, which had originally given it the impetus. This difference in the rise and decline of these two religions must, therefore, be due to a difference in the bearing of their principles upon human activity

and the causes of human civilization. On a close examination, the most important difference in the essential principles of these two religions will be found to exist in the fact that the dogmas of Christianity, which appear to have been invented some time after the death of Jesus Christ, made the Christian people superstitious, credulous, haters of science, inactive and indolent, while the principles of Islam as taught by the Holy Prophet gave his followers an impetus to work and fostered within them a spirit of enquiry and breathed into them an ardour for learning. These assertions with respect to these two people are strongly supported by their later history, and this, we think, is a sufficient proof of their truth. But we do not mean to stop here, We will enquire into their dogmas and principles and see what is the spirit which they are calculated to foster within those who adhere to them.

The most important dogma, the basis in fact, of Christianity,—Christianity not as taught by Christ, but as it was preached by Paul and as it is preached to-day,——is the doctrine of atonement, which, notwithstanding numerous explanations and theological quibblings, conveys to the masses the only significance that their burden has been carried away by another. This vicarious atonement, it is easy to see, must have exercised, and must exercise, a deadening effect upon activity, because it leaves naught for the individual to accomplish and removes the whole burden which lies on his shoulders. Believing in it, a man does not think it his duty to do any thing for his own welfare or the welfare of society. All this, he believes, has been done by Jesus Christ. Atonement thus brought human activity to a standstill and had a dulling effect upon all human faculties. Learning too was disfavored by the mysterious doctrine of Trinity taught by Christianity. This mystery was never to be approached, but was to be looked upon with reverence from afar. The reasoning and critical faculties were made to lie dormant, because their application led to heresy. Christianity did not teach plain and common-sense principles, and its mysterious doctrines of the Divinity of Jesus, of Trinity and atonement gave reasoning a death-blow from which it only recovered after the lapse of many hundreds of years of intellectual darkness when the light of knowledge was kindled upon the minaret of Islam. Moreover, the philosophy of the Gospel-teaching, however suited it may have been

for a particular race at a particular period of its history, could not form the basis of any civilized society. In fact the society would go to ruin which was guided by the principles of Gospel teaching. Nor can even individuals remain useful members of society if they act upon it. "Resist not evil" may be a good counsel, but the question is, if it should be acted upon on every occasion, if a man must silently watch when his wife is being ravished, or a friend is being murdered, or his property is being stolen. However morally touching such principles may, therefore, seem to be, it cannot be doubted that they cannot lead a people to the height of civilization.

While atonement had thus an effect of dulling human activity, the only outlet it gave to whatever of intelligence and learning was left in its advocates, was an unnecessary extolling of the great deed done by Jesus Christ in bringing a supposed deliverance to the human race by his alleged vicarious death. This was the one topic which received the whole attention of the Christian society. The feeling that Christ had taken away the believer's sins, to whatever extent they might actually exist, brought a complacence to the believer's mind, and the lavishing of praises upon the hero who had thus by a single stroke swept off sin from the face of the world, substituted emotion in place of action, and thus made the whole Christian society inert and inactive. This was the reason that as soon as Christianity in its present state gained a firm footing in the Roman empire, the mighty civilization of that people began to decay immediately until the light being utterly extinguished, the whole of Europe was involved in a total darkness of ignorance and indifference, out of which it began slowly to emerge only when Muslim civilization had kindled a new light in the world. And at last when atonement, in the sense in which Paul and his followers had taken it, began to be denied, because of its unphilosophical nature, the whole energy of Christendom thus let loose, was again directed to action and brought about the marvellous advancement which we witness to-day.

The rise and progress of Islam brought about totally different conditions in the world. At its birth the whole world was drowned in ignorance and barbarism, socially as well as morally, and with its entrance was again lit the torch of knowledge and civilization which continued to cast its light in the world until the true principles of

Islam were forgotten, and indolence had taken the place of the activity which it had breathed into its votaries. The fact is that the first and most essential principle of Islam, which struck at the root of atonement and thus of indolence also, was action. This is not only clear from the marvellous progress which the early Muslims made, and the mighty advancement in sciences and learning which their immediate followers attained to, but an examination of the teachings of Islam leads us also to the conclusion that the guiding principle in them was *action*. This was the motor of the mighty activity in the early Muslim world. The Holy Quran had announced in clear words and unambiguous accents that it was action only that could bring about the welfare of the individual as well as the society. It had struck deep at the doctrine of atonement by the death of Jesus by saying لا تزر وازرة وزر اخرى " No soul can carry the burden of another." Thus it directed every individual to action for his own emancipation as well as the emancipation of society. For, it can not be doubted that indolence and inactivity are the necessary attendants of the fallacious idea that the burden of one man can be taken away by another. It had also excited every individual to action by declaring : ان ليس للانسان الا ما سعى وان سعيه سوف يرى " Verily nothing can benefit a man except that he works, and verily his labours will soon be seen, *i.e.*, he would find the fruit of his labours." No clearer words than these were needed to give impetus to Muhammadan society, and so long as it acted upon these words, it stood at the top of all nations and was to them a guide. But when with the lapse of time these words were lost sight of, and the Muhammadans plunged into indolence and inactivity, they lost their position and fell because of their indifference to the precepts of the Holy Quran.

This disinclination to work exists to this day, and is to be observed even among the " advanced " Muhammadans. Unfortunately for Islam, those who have awaked from the long sleep into which the community fell when it departed from the noble injunctions of the Holy Quran, are dazzled by the splendour of Western civilization, and unable to see the truth have attributed it to wrong causes and thus again made a move in the wrong direction. Had they looked at things more calmly and with a dispassionate mind, they would have

discovered that the germs of the progress of Islam lay in its principles, and that the Christian nations did not step out of their backward condition until they began to act upon the guiding principles of Islam. This was the reason of the marvellous advancement made by the Muhammadan world in the past, and this is the reason of the wonderful progress made by the Christian nations. Ask Christendom to act upon the principles of Christianity and it will soon go back to a state of barbarism; ask the Muhammadan world to take again for their guidance the principles of Islam, and it will soon be at the top of nations. These are not flattering words, for we have quoted facts and shown that the principles of Islam are essentially the principles of advancement, while the principles of Christianity are essentially the principles of backwardness. Had this not been the case, such totally different conditions would not have arisen at the progress of these two religions, *viz.*, a marvellous advancement in the case of Islam, and a deplorable ignorance in the case of Christianity. The impetus given by Islam to learning and sciences is also a noteworthy fact. It did not, like Christianity, teach a mystery which could not be approached, but appealed again and again to reason, and thus enjoined the exercise of the reasoning faculty. Islam looked deep into all things: nothing which was essentially injurious could charm it by its outward beauty; no actually beneficial institution was hated by it because of some superficial defect. Intoxicating liquors may be cheering to the spirits and gambling may be a good diversion, but Islam could not be led away by these charms. It saw into the evil consequences which they ultimately bring about and plainly prohibited both, saying إثمهما أكبر من نفعهما "Their harms are very serious when compared with the small benefit they may yield." Divorce may appear shocking to some who give the marriage tie a sanction which can never be dissolved, but Islam saw that it was an indispensable institution for humanity and that cases arose when it was more beneficial for the individual as well as society to have the marriage tie dissolved. Permission to have in certain cases more wives than one may be distressing to the feelings of a particular community which has lived under totally different conditions for centuries, but Islam had the interests of the whole world before it and not the feelings of a particular community only. It saw that at times polygamy became necessary to remedy certain evils and therefore did not hesitate to prescribe it as a remedy.

It is a most serious misconception that polygamy is the rule in Islam. The rule is monogamy and polygamy is an exception necessitated by certain reasnns.

In short, it would be clear on a close examination of the principles of Islam, that the backwardness of the Muslims is not due to any defect in these principles. On the other hand, it has been brought about by a neglect of these principles and by an abuse of certain institutions. The contemporaniety of the spread of Christian dogmas with the plunging of the world into ignorance and barbarism, and the simultaneousness of the rise of Islam with the spread of learning and civilization, are two undeniable facts. And the third fact that Christendom rose to a state of civilization only when the doctrines of Christianity lost their hold over the minds of men, is equally certain. And when it is remembered that the guiding principles of Christianity and Islam are opposed to each other, the fourth fact follows as an inevitable conclusion that the rise of Islam and its attainment to the foremost place among nations is indissolvably bound with the re-animation of the true principles of Islam and the re-awaking of the Muslims to act up to them. And what is needed, in fact the only thing that is needed, for this purpose is the guiding hand of one who like the Holy Prophet and following in his footsteps should breathe a fresh life into the Muhammadans and re-animate them with the spirit of activity.

Belief in Miracles as required by the Holy Quran.

Of all the great religious systems of the world, Islam alone enjoys the distinction of being an historic religion, while its founder, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, occupies pre-eminently an historic position among the eminent teachers of mankind. Even if no value is attached to the doubts entertained by some modern critics as to the very existence of some of the great personages who are looked upon as the founders of great religions, this much cannot be denied that with the exception of our

Holy Prophet, myth and history, fiction and fact, are inseparably mixed in the lives of the founders of all the religions which have influenced, or are influencing, a considerable portion of mankind. This we do not state simply as an empty peculiarity. On the other hand, we see that every important event and particular of the Holy Prophet's life is placed before us with all the clearness in the light of history. All that is necessary we know of him, and nothing that was of importance in his life, is hidden from our eyes. Thus knowing him fully, the critic is in a position to study him in the light of history and to judge his words and deeds critically. But not so with the founders of other religions, who can be seen only dimly through the gloom of fiction and mythology which has gathered round their names. Their teachings, their miracles, their words and their deeds, are all tinged with myth and dubiety. But in the case of our Holy Prophet, there is all the evidence in these matters which is necessary to place them on a sound historical basis.

On the other hand, the pains taken by Muhammadan writers in ascertaining the true facts of the Holy Prophet's life and in sifting the traditional lore, is also unequalled. We can hardly conceive the difficulties which they had to encounter and the immense labour they had to spend, in arriving at a definite conclusion as to the authenticity of every single report which was transmitted orally. This careful and minute scrutiny has to a very great extent purified the collection of traditions of the element of fabrication, and thus separating truth from falsehood places before the critic a trustworthy information. That there may be errors still in the mass of traditions in spite of the researching enquiries made, we do not deny, but such error does not in any way affect their reliability. For, it must be admitted that slight variations in narratives of the same event are far from being an evidence of its non-occurrence. If such were the case, we would have to reject every historical event. Even in this age when printing presses, post offices and telegraphs have facilitated the task of correctly recording every event as it takes place, such variations cannot be avoided. In short, traditions cannot be divested of their authority and the historical value they possess, by the mere consideration that even the minute scrutiny of early collectors may not have freed them from every error, while their authenticity can be further

tested by the consideration that no authentic tradition can contradict the Holy Quran.

By drawing the reader's attention to the value of traditions, our object is to show that though the Holy Quran affords the clearest proof of the miracles of our Holy Prophet, yet even those miracles which are narrated in the traditions, whose authenticity has been established, cannot be ignored, for they were not accepted as true until the minutest possible scrutiny had been made as to their truth. The acceptance of Jesus' miracles by the Christians stands on quite a different basis. The manner in which they accepted certain narratives of the doings and sayings of Jesus, simply excites laughter. Nothing was done to test the truth of this or that narrative ; in fact not much could have been done at so late a date. Books admitted in the canon were determined by an utterly arbitrary choice and not because the occurrences recorded in them were found to be historically true, while the rejection of others as false and spurious was not due to the fact that the events recorded in them were ascertained to be false. This was done after three hundred years when even an enquiry could not have done much benefit. Now under these circumstances, an impartial critic cannot accept the miracles of Jesus only upon the authority of books which are themselves of a doubtful origin, as the Gospels undoubtedly are. The evidence of the Gospels must, therefore, be backed up by other and more reliable testimony. The record of the Holy Prophet's miracles, on the other hand, is of the nature of a history, for not a word of it was allowed to claim an authority unless complete enquiry had been made as to its truth. Moreover the enquiry in this case commenced very soon after the Holy Prophet at a time when the truth of those events could be easily ascertained. Thus the miracles recorded in the traditions possess the clearest proof of their truth and do not need any other evidence. Our object in this article is however to show that apart from traditions, the Holy Quran also whose authority as a true record is quite unassailable, requires us to believe in the miracles of the Holy Prophet and affords the clearest evidence of their truth.

It should be noted in the first place that every verse of the Holy Quran was at its revelation circulated among the friends and foes of Islam in a manner which is without a parallel in history. Every

word of it was, at the time of its revelation, recited by the Holy Prophet in assemblies containing his friends as well as foes, and thus it got full publicity. For men who, in declaring themselves to be the followers of the Holy Prophet, had to cut off all connections and undergo the hardest trials and persecutions, the Word of God which was revealed to their beloved Master from time to time, was as the food upon which their spirits fed, and it was imprinted upon the tablets of their hearts which were ever ready to receive it in such a manner that they could never forget it. This was the reason that there was not a single companion of the Holy Prophet who had not some portion of the Holy Quran by heart, while many of them knew the whole of it. Amid all the hard trials and persecutions which they had to suffer, it was the only thing which brought them solace and satisfaction, and accordingly they ran to drink of the fountain of revelation with the swiftness and eagerness of a traveller, who being parched with thirst suddenly sees in a desert a spring of water. So great was their eagerness that those among them who were obliged to remain apart from the company of the Holy Prophet for the transaction of their affairs had made arrangements by which every two of them could alternately live in the company of the Holy Prophet, and thus they kept themselves daily informed of the Divine revelations. In short, every verse of the Holy Quran gained full publicity with its revelation. Moreover, the new mission spent all its efforts for the conversion of the unbelievers and thus the new portions received by the Holy Prophet daily were recited to the unbelievers as they were invited to accept the religion of Unity. Every follower of the Holy Prophet deemed it his first duty to convey to others, believers or unbelievers, whatever he heard from the Holy Prophet. The Holy Quran further contained the challenge that being of Divine origin the like of it could not be produced by sum of mortal efforts, and in such a case it cannot be supposed that those to whom the challenge was given were kept ignorant of the very thing the like of which they were asked to make. In addition to all these facts, the recital of the Holy Quran was obligatory in the five daily prayers, and when the Imam read it aloud to his audience, the unbelievers could not have remained ignorant of it. Had the opponents of Islam reflected over a single circumstance, *viz.*, how boldly and openly Islam presented

in the public all that it had to say, they would not have doubted its truth. It did not keep anything hidden or concealed, but announced in a loud voice its doctrines, beliefs and revelations. It laid open its property before the eyes of men so that they might examine it critically and accept it after they had found it faultless. It taught no unapproachable mystery, concealed nothing and kept nothing in the dark. What a contrast when we read, on the one hand, the story of a man now made a God who when he had told his chosen disciples that he was the Messiah at once gave them the strict orders that they should not give the matter out, and see, on the other, a man claiming to be a prophet who announces in a loud voice and clear accents, not only his claim to this heavenly office, but also every word of what he believes to have come down to him from God, thus showing that he was fully conscious and knew with certainty that what he said was true, and what he offered was truth, and that the critical eye of a searcher after truth could not find any fault in it. In fine, the publicity which every verse of the Holy Quran obtained among the friends and foes of Islam, at the time of its revelation, is the most conclusive proof that while its followers knew every word of it to be certainly true, even its opponents had no objection to the facts recorded in it.

Now the Holy Quran states in clear words the working of miracles by the Holy Prophet, and on this very ground charges the unbelievers with having rejected what was proved to them by arguments and signs to be true. It should be borne in mind that the Holy Quran does not use the word *Mujiza* (miracle) anywhere. To denote the supernatural occurrences which cannot be brought about by the power of a mortal, it uses the word آيات meaning signs, or بينات or آيات بينات meaning arguments or clear and manifest arguments, because they are signs of the existence of God and of the truth of the Holy Prophet, and manifest arguments the truth of which cannot be questioned. As the existence of God is hidden from the eyes of men, the ordinary occurrences which one witnesses daily cannot serve as arguments for His existence. It is for this purpose that extraordinary occurrences beyond mortal power are manifested at the hands of prophets and these are called signs. From the Holy Quran it appears clearly that our Holy Prophet showed many such signs

to the unbelievers of Mecca, but they called them sorcery and treated the Holy Prophet as a liar and laughed him to scorn, and demanded new signs. The following verses of the Holy Quran establish the truth of this statement: وإذا جاءتهم آية قالوا لن نؤمن حتى نؤتى مثل ما أوتي رسل الله (الأنعام ١٢٥) "And when a sign comes to them, they say, 'we will by no means believe till what has been accorded to the apostles of God is accorded to ourselves," (vi: 125). This verse shows clearly that signs were shown to the unbelievers, but instead of accepting the Holy Prophet they said that they would not believe until the powers of working miracles which had been granted to the prophets of God were also granted to them. Again the Holy Quran says: قد جاءكم بصائر من ربكم فمن أبصر فلنفسه ومن عمي فعليها (الأنعام ١٠٥) "Now have proofs that may be seen, (*i.e.*, clear signs), come to you from your Lord: whoso sees them, the advantage will be his own: and whoso is blind to them, his own will be the loss" (vi: 105). In the beginning of the chapter, entitled the *Moon*, it says: وإن يروا آية يعرضوا ويقولوا سحر مستمر (القمر ٢) "And when the unbelievers see a sign, they turn aside and say, 'This is magic continuing in a regular course'" (liv: 2). In calling the signs of the Holy Prophet سحر مستمر, the unbelievers meant to say that as the former prophets showed signs which were really sorcery, so the signs of the Holy Prophet were also a kind of magic. Mark also the verses: وإذا ذكروا لا يذكرون وإذا رأوا آية يستسخرون وقالوا إن هذا إلا سحر مبين (والصفت ١٣ - ١٥) "And when they are warned, no warning do they take; and when they see a sign, they fall to mocking, and say: 'Lo, this is no other than clear sorcery'" (xxxvii: 13–15). Here again there is a clear statement that miracles were shown, but the unbelievers only mocked and called them a sorcery. On another occasion, the Holy Quran says: كيف يهدي الله قوما كفروا بعد إيمانهم وشهدوا أن الرسول حق وجاءهم البينات (آل عمران ٨٥) "How shall God guide a people who, after they had believed and borne witness that the Apostle was true, and after that clear proofs of his mission had reached them, disbelieved?" (iii: 85). And again: ولقد أنزلنا إليك آيات بينات وما يكفر بها إلا الفاسقون (البقرة ٩٩) "Moreover, clear signs have We sent down to thee, and none will disbelieve them but the perverse" (ii: 99).

All these verses show conclusively that the unbelievers saw miracles worked by the Holy Prophet, but they called the miracles a sorcery and mocked the Holy Prophet and called him a liar. It is the height of absurdity to say in the face of these clear statements that the Holy Quran denies the working of miracles by the Holy Prophet. It is true that the Holy Quran does not detail these miracles, but of that there was no need. These details are fully contained in authentic traditions and nearly three thousand miracles of the Holy Prophet are proved by the testimony of the companions. Similarly there are hundreds of prophecies recorded in the books on traditions which were fulfilled in their time. Two objections need however to be particularly discussed. The first is based on the first of the following verses of the chapter entitled the *Spider* : وقالوا لولا انزل عليه ايات من ربه قل انما الايات عند الله وانما انا نذير مبين ۔ اولم يكفهم انا انزلنا عليك الكتب يتلى عليهم ان فى ذلك لرحمة وذكرى لقوم يومنون ۔ و يستعجلونك بالعذاب ولولا اجل مسمى لجاءهم العذاب وليا تينهم بغتة وهم لا يشعرون (العنكبوت ۵۰-۵۳)

Those who consider these verses as an authority for the denial of miracles are mistaken. They do not read all these verses together, but read the first portion and omit the latter. But even the first portion of the first verse read alone does not prove that signs were not shown. It only says: "And the unbelievers say, 'why is not a sign sent down to him from his Lord.'" When the Holy Quran repeatedly blames the unbelievers for their rejection of it, in spite of their having seen signs, as we have shown above, and calls them unjust, perverse and unbelieving for their persistent denial, it is not reasonable to take this verse as meaning that the unbelievers denied that any sign had ever been shown. The only inference to which these words read alone would lead, would be in this case that they treated the signs which had already been shown as naught, as we have already seen that they called them sorcery and magic, and demanded fresh signs which should convince them of their truth. In our own time the meaning of this verse becomes still more clear when we see that though thousands of signs have been shown by the Promised Messiah, yet those who deny him say that no sign has been shown. Thus it has happened in every age and in the case of every prophet of God. But the context clearly shows that the unbelievers did not deny

generally the miracles of our Holy Prophet and that they demanded a particular sign, and it is of this sign that the verses quoted above speak. Reading the chapter containing these verses from the beginning, it is quite clear that Almighty God warned the opponents of the Holy Prophet to take a lesson from the fate of those who opposed and persecuted the prophets of God before them, and with this object told them that when they persisted in denying the miracles of the prophets of God, destruction was brought upon them. Thus it speaks separately of the punishment brought down by heaven's wrath upon the people of Noah, Lot and Shuaib, and upon Ad, Samood, Korah, Pharaoh and Haman, and then sums up thus: فكلا اخذنا بذنبه فمنهم من ارسلنا عليه حاصبا ومنهم من اخذته الصيحة ومنهم من خسفنا به الارض ومنهم من اغرقنا وما كان الله ليظلمهم ولكن كانوا انفسهم يظلمون . . . . . وتلك الامثال نضربها للناس (العنكبوت ٤٠ و ٤٣) "Every one of them We destroyed because of his sins: against some of them did We send a furious wind, some of them were taken by a terrible cry, some of them were sunk into earth, and some of them were drowned. And it was not God who dealt with them unjustly, but they dealt unjustly with their own souls. .....And these instances, We cite for these people" (xxix: 40, 43). Thus were the unbelievers told repeatedly that punishment would come down upon them on account of their rejection of the heavenly signs shown by the Holy Prophet as it had come down upon those who formerly rejected the signs of the prophets who were sent to them. The words "Why is not a sign sent down" are really a reply to this warning and have been quoted as such in the Holy Quran. The unbelievers meant to say why was not the threat of punishment executed. Similar requests of the unbelievers are contained elsewhere in the Holy Quran as in the following verse: واذ قالوا اللهم ان كان هذا هو الحق من عندك فامطر علينا حجارة من السماء او ائتنا بعذاب اليم (الانفال ٣٢) "And when the unbelievers prayed saying, 'O God! if this religion is the true one, and if the signs which are shown in its support, are from Thee, rain down stones upon us from heaven or lay on us some grievous chastisement for rejecting these.'" Such thoughts arose in the minds of the unbelievers when the Holy Quran blaming them for their rejection of the signs of God threatened them with punishment. The fulfilment of these threatenings is thus

spoken of in the Holy Quran in the following verses: كدأب آل فرعون والذين من قبلهم كفروا بآيات الله فأخذهم الله بذنوبهم "Their state is like that of the people of Pharaoh and of those before them, who believed not in the signs of God, therefore, God seized upon them in their sin"; and again, كدأب آل فرعون والذين من قبلهم كذبوا بآيات ربهم فأهلكنهم بذنوبهم وأغرقنا آل فرعون "Their state is like that of the people of Pharaoh, and of those before them who treated their Lord's signs as lies. We, therefore, destroyed them in their sins, and We drowned the people of Pharaoh." (viii: 52, 54).

In short, the question of the unbelievers in the verses quoted above, related to the threatened punishment. This is clear, as shown above, from a consideration of the verses preceding the one under discussion. The verses following it lead us to the same conclusion. They may be translated as below: "They say, 'Why are not signs sent down to him?' Say, the signs which you demand (*i.e.*, the signs of punishment) are certainly in the power of God, and what am I but an open warner of this very punishment. Is it not enough for those who demand the sign of punishment that We have sent down to thee (in spite of thy being an *ummi*, *i.e.*, unacquainted with letters) the Book to be recited to them? In this verily is a mercy and a remembrance for those who believe. And they challenge thee to hasten the punishment (and take no advantage of the signs of mercy which have been manifested for them). Had there not been an hour fixed for it, that punishment had already come upon them. But overtake them it will most surely, suddenly and when they look not for it." (xxix: 50, 53). The last verse throws light upon the meaning of the first, and explains, the word 'signs' occurring there as meaning not ordinary signs, but the signs of punishment, which they challenged the Prophet to hasten. And what it is most important to bear in mind is that signs are not denied here. On the other hand, it is plainly asserted that the sign demanded would be surely sent at the appointed time. The words "had there not been an hour fixed for it," refer to the prophecies in which it had been said, as stated elsewhere in the Holy Quran, that punishment would not be sent down upon the Meccans so long as the Holy Prophet lived among them, and that it would be sent after the passing away of one year from the time that the Holy Prophet left Mecca, prophecies which were brought to fulfilment at

the exact hour in the field of Badr and subsequent battles.

In these verses Almighty God further exhorts the unbelievers to refrain from demanding a sign of punishment when they were made to witness the signs of the mercy of God which could show them the truth of the existence of God and of the mission of the Holy Prophet. The object which they had in view in demanding a sign of punishment could also be attained by a sign of mercy. What they wanted was to realise the certainty of the truth of the Holy Prophet's mission, and this object, they thought, could not be effected merely by signs which they could witness, for there was the possibility in that case, they argued, that they might be deceived. This is clear from their calling these signs a sorcery. Hence they desired that punishment should overtake them so that realising the punishment they might also realise the truth of the Prophet's mission. But Almighty God told them that their perplexity and doubts could be removed in another manner. All that they desired was a sign of which they might not only be the observers, but the effect of which should be clearly witnessed in themselves. For this, they were told, the sign of punishment was not necessary, for the same object could be fulfilled by a sign of mercy, by the Holy Quran which was dazzling their eyes with its splendour and the brilliance of the powerful light it cast upon them, showing its inherent excellences, truths and beauties and its supernatural characteristics in such a wonderful manner as to baffle them altogether, casting a supernatural and wholesome influence upon the people, bringing about wonderful transformations in those hearts which had given it reception, bringing to life the dead of ages, resorting sight to the born blind, healing various sorts of the diseases of unbelief and scepticism, cleansing the lepers who were seriously affected with bigotry, bringing light and dispelling darkness and last of all bringing about man's union with God.

If any one were to consider these verses, being freed from prejudice, he would at once see that there is no denial of miracles in them. They declare with a loud voice that the unbelievers demanded the sign of punishment with which they had been aforetime threatened. They were told in the first place that the sign of punishment would bring about their destruction while the object they wanted to

attain could be attained by the sign of mercy, *i.e.*, the Holy Quran, which could give them life and save them from the destruction into which they were leading themselves by their own demands. But said the Holy Quran, if they were not satisfied with this, then the sign of punishment would also be sent and that it would surely overtake them when the appointed hour came. Thus the promise of the sign of punishment is confirmed in these verses after drawing attention to the signs of mercy which were contained in the Holy Quran. It is nothing but ignorance of the Holy Quran on the part of those who pretend to deduce from these verses a denial of signs. The vanquished idolators of Mecca could not deny the miracles of the Holy Prophet, for not only did they afterwards accept all the signs which he had shown by accepting the truth of his mission and becoming Muslims, but even in the days of their opposition to him they could not totally deny the existence of such signs and wonderingly described them as magic in other countries. Thus they confessed their manifestation at the hands of the Holy Prophet though giving them another name. These confessions of theirs are also found in the Holy Quran. Had they been absolute deniers of the miracles of the Holy Prophet, they could not have attained to such certainty after their acceptance of Islam as they showed in spilling their blood and sacrificing their lives for the sake of the Holy Prophet. At the height of their opposition they called the Holy Prophet a *sâhir* (sorcerer) as is evident from the verse: وقال الكفرون هذا ساحر كذاب (ص-۴) "And the unbelievers say, 'This is a sorcerer, a liar'" (xxxviii: 4). It is clear therefore that they saw certain signs but as they thought the Holy Prophet to be a liar, they did not attribute them to his miraculous power, but considered them to have been shown by sorcery. But later on they saw their own errors and acknowledged with a sincere heart that the signs shown them were heavenly signs. The whole peninsula of Arabia by its acceptance of Islam thus became a witness to the mighty miracles of our Holy Prophet. The Meccans never conceived the idea of totally denying the manifestation of such deeds at the hands of the Holy Prophet as could not be effected by mortal power alone. All the circumstances point clearly to the fact that wherever the Holy Quran speaks of the Meccans, as denying that signs were shown them, such signs of punishment only are meant as were demanded by them before punishment was brought down upon them.

Another verse of the Holy Quran which is construed into a denial of miracles, occurs in the chapter entitled the "Israelites." For an insight into the meaning of this verse, it is necessary to quote it along with the preceding and subsequent verses. Read together, these verses run as follows: وان من قرية الا نحن مهلكوها قبل يوم القيامة او معذبوها عذابا شديدا كان ذلك في الكتب مسطورا • وما منعنا ان نرسل بالايات الا ان كذب بها الاولون واتينا ثمود الناقة مبصرة فظلموا بها وما نرسل بالايات الا تخويفا (بني اسرائيل ٥٨, ٥٩) "It is a sign of Our wrath that there is not a village which, before the day of judgment, We will not either destroy or chastise with a grievous punishment. So it has been written in the Book. But We do not send some of the (past) signs (of our wrath), because they were called lies by the past generations. Thus We had given to Samood a she-camel (as a precursor of the punishment which was to come upon them) by which they could see the truth, but they maltreated her. And We do not send the signs of wrath, but to strike terror (and hence We do not send back the signs of wrath which former people called a lie and by which they were not inspired with awe") (xvii: 58, 59).

Before discussing the meaning of these verses, it is necessary to point out that the signs which are manifested by God at the hands of a prophet, are of two kinds, *viz.*, signs of terror and chastisement, and signs of rejoicing and satisfaction, in other words, the signs of Divine wrath and the signs of Divine mercy. The signs of wrath are manifested for the perverse and hard-hearted and refractory people, so that they may strike the awe of Divine glory and majesty into their hearts. The signs of mercy are displayed for the faithful and the earnest seekers after truth who sincerely desire that their faith may be strengthened, and that they may attain to perfect certainty, and who show meekness and humbleness of heart. They are not meant to inspire awe or strike terror into hearts, for they are manifested for those who have already bowed with true submission at the Divine threshold. To such God turns in His mercy and breathes satisfaction into their souls, thus strengthening their faith and increasing their certainty. The faithful man witnesses these signs of mercy through the Holy Quran and advances by their means in his faith and certainty. With such signs the feebleness and waveringness of the

heart is taken away and a tranquility descends upon it. And as the faithful one witnesses these signs, his life becomes a life of peace and tranquility which is not disturbed with doubts. This bliss he enjoys to the end of his days and thus he reaches the highest stage of perfection in his knowledge and certainty, advancing at the same time in his love of God, on account of the manifest and hidden blessings and favours which he receives from Almighty God. It is, therefore, through the signs of mercy that a man can attain to the goal of spiritual perfection. They have in them a grandeur, an efficacy and a blessedness which make the spiritual wayfarer attain to perfect knowledge and the highest point in the love of God which His chosen servants have reached. These signs are numerous and cannot be counted by twos and threes, for they rain in abundance upon every faithful servant of God. They are not limited to any particular age, but regarding them the Almighty has given a promise in the Holy Quran that they will always be granted to the faithful. Thus it says: الذين امنوا وكانوا يتقون • لهم البشرى في الحيوة الدنيا وفي الاخرة لا تبديل لكلمت الله ذلك الفوز العظيم (يونس ٦٣, ٦٤)

"The faithful men who walk in righteousness, would be favored with signs of rejoicing in this life as well as in the next, (and through them they would go on making unbounded progress in the love and knowledge of God). This is the Word of God and it shall never pass away; and to be favored with the signs of Divine mercy is the greatest success, (*i.e.*, it is the thing which makes a man attain to the desired place in Divine love and knowledge)" (x: 63, 64).

If now we go back to the verse in dispute, it will be at once clear that in that verse only the signs of wrath, signs which strike terror into the heart, are spoken of, and this is evident from the latter portion of the verse which plainly says: وما نرسل بالايات الا تخويفا "And the signs demanded by the unbelievers we do not send, but to strike terror." For it can be easily seen that الايات "the signs," spoken of in the first portion of the verse, are the same as الايات "the signs" spoken of in the latter portion. But in the latter case the word الايات meaning "the signs" is further qualified by the description that they are sent to strike terror and hence they belong to the first kind of signs, that is to say, they are the signs of wrath. Therefore, the signs of mercy are not spoken of in this verse at all, for as

shown above the signs of mercy are not sent to strike terror. This much is, therefore, settled beyond all contention that by the signs spoken of in the verse under discussion, are meant only the signs of wrath and not all sorts of signs which Almighty God shows in support of His prophets. The next point to be settled about the meaning of this verse is, what interpretation is applicable in the case. It may either mean that no sign of wrath was manifested at the hands of the Holy Prophet, or that such signs of wrath were not manifested as had been shown previously, or that only those signs of wrath were not shown, which having been shown formerly were treated as lies. Now the first two interpretations are on their very face inapplicable, for the former people had not belied all the signs of wrath which Almighty God could manifest. The power of God to manifest His signs of wrath could not be taken to be limited to the signs which had already been manifested, nor could the former people reject a sign which had not been as yet manifested. The clear interpretation of the verse is, therefore, only this that certain signs which had been sent by Almighty God in time past, and which had been rejected by former people, would not be sent back because they had already been rejected. Further than this the verse does not go and it is absurd to take it to mean a denial of all sorts of signs.

In short, the verse in dispute while denying the manifestation of a certain class of signs, upholds the view that signs were manifested in other forms. To send the same signs over again which had already been charged with falsehood, would have been a weakness which could not be imputed to Almighty God. It was not at all necessary that the signs which had been shown for Moses or Noah or those which had brought about the destruction of Samood or Ad, should be again manifested against the unbelievers of Mecca. The truth of the Holy Prophet's mission did not depend upon these, and numerous signs, much grander than those shown previously, had been shown establishing his truth. Not satisfied with these the unbelievers demanded a sign of punishment and asked to be destroyed in the manner in which the former rejecters of the prophets had been destroyed. In reply to this they were told that signs would certainly be manifested, but it was not necessary that the same signs should be sent back. If we take the word بِالْآيَاتِ to mean signs generally,

another difficulty would arise. For in that case the Holy Quran would seem to be countenancing the law that if once a sign was treated as a lie, then no sign whatever should be shown. If this were true, then no sooner the first sign was rejected than Almighty God ought to have discontinued the sending of further signs, which is manifestly absurd. Moreover, the Holy Quran has itself explained that the same sign was not sent to all people, but that for each a different sign was manifested. That an absolute denial even of a sign of wrath is not meant in the verse under discussion, is apparent from the following verses of the Holy Quran in which such threat has been held out to the Meccans: ويستعجلونك بالعذاب ولن يخلف الله وعده (الحج ٤٧) قل هو القادر على ان يبعث عليكم عذابا من فوقكم او من تحت ارجلكم او يلبسكم شيعا ويذيق بعضكم باس بعض (الانعام ٦٥) و قل الحمد لله سيريكم ايته فتعرفونها (النمل ٩٣) قل لكم ميعاد يوم لا تستاخرون عنه ساعة ولا تستقدمون (السبا ٢٩) ويستنبئونك احق هو قل اى وربى انه لحق وما انتم بمعجزين (يونس ٥٣) سنريهم ايتنا فى الافاق وفى انفسهم حتى يتبين لهم انه الحق (حم السجدة ٥٣) سأريكم ايتى فلا تستعجلون (الانبياء ٣٧) "And they will bid thee to hasten the chastisement, but let them bear in mind that God will not fail His threat. Say, God is He who has power to send on you a punishment from above you, or from beneath your feet, or to bring about discord among you and to make some of you taste the violence of others. And say, praise be to God; He will show you His signs, and you shall acknowledge them. Say, (the execution of) the threat (of punishment) given to you will take place after a day (one year), which not for an hour can you retard or hasten on. And they ask thee, 'Is this true,' (*i.e.*, will the threat of punishment come to pass)? Say; Yes! by my Lord it is the very truth and you cannot frustrate His power to bring it about. We will show them Our signs in the extremities of this land, and also among themselves until it become quite clear to them that it is the truth. I will show you my signs: desire them not then to be hastened."

It is clear from the verses quoted here that the threat of punishment had been repeatedly given to the unbelievers and it was the execution of this threat which they again and again demanded. We have, moreover, shown above that the signs denied in the verse in

dispute, do not include all sorts of signs, and the truth of this has been made manifest by reading with this verse, the verse which follows it. A consideration of the preceding verse leads us to the same conclusion. The preceding verse as quoted and translated above, also speaks of a sign of the wrath of heaven, *viz.*, a Divine visitation from which no village would be saved, the time of it being stated to be 'before the day of judgment,' which is in other words the time of the Promised Messiah. The prophecy contained in this verse tells us that many villages would then be destroyed and many visited with severe punishment, none being left unaffected. The fulfilment of this prophecy we are witnessing with our own eyes, for in this country where a messenger of God has been raised in this age in accordance with the Divine promises made of old, and where the signs shown by him have been rejected, the sign of the wrath of God has at last been manifested in the form of the plague which has already wrought havoc in the country, and what it may effect in the future, is not yet known. Thus in the verse preceding the verse under discussion, Almighty God has called attention to a sign of His wrath, and this is also an indication that only signs of wrath are spoken of here.

The Holy Quran blames the unbelievers of Mecca for their persistent denial in another manner too. It shows the falsity of their assertions by drawing attention to signs already witnessed and even admitted as true by the unbelievers, as is evident from *Al-i-Imran*, 85: "How shall God guide a people who, after they had believed and borne witness that the apostle was true, and after that clear signs of his truth had reached them, disbelieved?" Here it is clearly asserted, and the assertions of the Holy Quran are based on facts which the Meccans never denied, that the unbelievers witnessed the working of miracles by the Holy Prophet until they were convinced of his truth, but that afterwards they again denied. Of such Almighty God hardened the hearts, for they saw the light and then preferred to live in darkness. This verse may be compared with the following for further miracles on the part of unbelievers, for of what use could further miracles be to a people who had seen miracles already and even admitted their truth, but still disbelieved. Similarly in *Al-Anaam* 110, the Holy Quran says: وا قسموا با لله جهد ا يما نهم لئن جا ء تهم ا ية ليؤ منن بها قل ا نما ا لا يا ت عند ا لله و ما يشعركم ا نها ا ذ ا جا ء ت لا

يؤمنون "With their most binding oath they swear by God and say to the Muslims that if the sign (which they demanded) come to them, they will believe it. Say, all signs are with my God (who has power to show them), but what shall make you to understand that when the demanded sign would come, they will not believe even then." And then goes on to say : ونقلب افئدتهم وابصارهم كما لم يؤمنوا به اول مرة "And We will turn their hearts and their eyes (so that they would not believe in the miracle when wrought) as they did not believe in the signs when shown first."

Now all these verses and others to the same effect were repeatedly rehearsed before the unbelievers, to say nothing of the Muhammadans who read them day and night. If then no miracle had actually been wrought, how could the Muhammadans remain believers in a book which claimed to be a revelation from God and yet made statements false on the very face of them, because it asserted that numerous miracles had been wrought while actually not a single one had been witnessed by them or by any one else. If no sign had been shown, then the Holy Quran made statements known to be false to the followers of the Holy Prophet, and they could not have given it any credit. But they believed it to be the very truth and this with perfect certainty, so much so, that they forsook worldly comforts, pleasure and wealth for its sake, nay they forsook their nearest relatives and dearest friends and spilt their blood in its cause. On the other hand, if the unbelievers, had seen no sign, why did they not say so, and why did they call the Holy Prophet a sorcerer and the signs a sorcery ? What were the deeds done by the Holy Prophet for which they called him a sorcerer ? Does it not appear wonderful that the Holy Quran, read openly day and night in gatherings of the Muhammadans and unbelievers, declared in a loud voice that miracles had been wrought but that the unbelievers called them a sorcery, if actually neither a miracle had been wrought nor had the unbelievers called it a sorcery ? And is it not still more wonderful that these very unbelievers afterwards bowed down their heads in submission before the Holy Quran and accepted it as the very Word of God ? If no sign had been shown, then it is equally true that the unbelievers had not called the Holy Prophet a sorcerer. How could they then believe in the Holy Quran knowing that it contained assertions

manifestly false? What! could it say that signs had been shown but that the unbelievers had rejected them as being a sorcery, whereas neither asign had been shown nor had they ever termed it a sorcery? It is quite a different thing that the wonderful deeds done by the Holy Prophet, which they ultimately admitted to be heavenly signs, were ascribed by them in the days of their opposition to the power of sorcery. Both these statements are consistent in this respect that they acknowledged the doing of certain deeds beyond mortal power and hence they could believe in their truth after rejecting them. But to have seen no miracles, to have never rejected them and to have never called them a sorcery, and then confess that signs had been seen, rejected and called a sorcery, is what cannot be conceived of. Turn over the pages of the Holy Quran and take them in any light, it cannot be denied that the Holy Quran asserts the working of miracles by the Holy Prophet.

We have stated above that the signs shown by a prophet are either signs of mercy bringing good news or signs of wrath and punishment. It is for this reason that a prophet is called a *basheer*, an announcer of good news, and a *nazeer*, a warner against punishment. Now the joyful news which the prophet announces, and the punishment against which he warns men, are not limited solely to the life after death. Their effect is witnessed in this very life and thus perfect certainty is generated in the heart with regard to the promises and threats made concerning the next life. Of the two parties into which men are split at the appearance of a prophet, he conveys the glad tidings of ultimate success and prosperity beginning with this life to those who following in his footsteps walk in righteousness and show the paths of evil, and threatens with failure and destruction those who charge him with falsehood, and devise plans to extirpate him and his teachings. When both these parties realise the fulfilment of these promises and threats, they are convinced, with the highest degree of certainty, of the truth of the promises and threats made concerning the next life, and they see with clearness that the prophet did not speak as a mere mortal, but was backed by a power which must be the source of perfect knowledge and perfect power. This was the reason that when the Meccans witnessed failure after failure and saw at last in the victory of Mecca the fulfilment of

the grand promise which had been made to them in the very beginning of the Prophet's career, they came to know with perfect certainty that the signs which they had ridiculed and treated as lies and sorcery, proceeded really from God, the source of mighty power and knowledge. There is no doubt that a certain degree of obscurity, however slight it may be, hangs about ordinary miracles, and perfect satisfaction and complete certainty are obtained only by the miracle the effect of which is realised by a man in his own person. In the case of the faithful servants of God, this object is effected by the signs which announce the glad tidings of the mercy and blessings of God, while in that of the transgressors, the punishment of heaven descends upon them and makes them realise the truth. This is the reason that the Holy Quran has not given details of the miracles wrought by our Holy Prophet and has laid great stress upon only one of them, *viz.*, that which related to his own ultimate triumph and victory and to the failure and vanquishment of the unbelievers. It was on the manifestation of this grand sign, the greatest miracle that has been wrought in the world, the most conclusive proof of the mighty power and knowledge of God, the most wonderful manifestation of Divine majesty and glory, that the whole of Arabia bowed down its proud head before the majesty of the truth of Islam, and that people whose stiff necks had never borne the yoke of any power, now willingly and with true joy submitted themselves to bear the yoke of Islam. Peace and the blessings of God may for ever descend on the holy one through whom this wonderful transformation was brought about in the world.

The unbelieving Meccans used to demand three kinds of signs from the Holy Prophet. Firstly, signs involving punishment, as proposed by themselves; secondly, signs involving punishment which had already been manifested for the chastisement of previous people or as precursors of such chastisement; and thirdly, material and gross signs inconsistent with faith. As regards the first kind, many verses have already been quoted from the Holy Quran. The reply given to their demand was that punishment would be sent down upon them from heaven, or from earth, or in the form of battles between the two parties. This threat was executed by means of the battles which the Holy Prophet had to fight. As regards the second kind, there are also many verses as has been shown above. The following verses also bear upon the

same subject: افتاتون السحر وانتم تبصرون . . . . . فليأتنا بآية كما ارسل الاولون ٠ ما امنت قبلهم من قرية اهلكناها افهم يومنون (الانبياء ٣-٦) "The unbelievers say among themselves: 'Will you then accept sorcery while you see it to be such. Let him (if he is true) show a sign like the signs shown by those who were sent formerly.' Before their time none of the cities which We have destroyed, believed: will these men then, believe?" Here, it will be seen, when the unbelievers demanded a sign like the signs with which former prophets were sent, the reply given to them was that in that case they would not believe, for none of those upon whom signs of destruction were sent formerly, became a believer thereby. Here Almighty God gives the reason why He did not bring down upon them a punishment like that which had been brought down upon former generations, as that would involve their utter destruction. But as He had sent the Holy Prophet as a mercy for the whole world, He did not wish to destroy his people altogether although on account of their transgressions they deserved such punishment. The chastisement sent to them was a milder one which as it brought about the destruction of the more obdurate among them, the chief of the transgressors, left a vast majority to realise the truth of Divine promises and to accept the truth. This was because the Holy Prophet was sent as a mercy, and hence Almighty God dealt mercifully with even his opponents and instead of destroying them, gave them life by bringing them to the acceptance of Islam. It was for this reason that in response to the persistent demands of the unbelievers to send down upon them a punishment like that of which the stories were narrated to them, Almighty God repeatedly said that similar punishment would not be sent upon them, because He did not wish to destroy them altogether from the face of the earth. The third kind of demand is also related in the Holy Quran as would appear from the following verses: "And they say, 'By no means will we believe on thee, till thou cause a fountain to gush forth for us from the earth; or, till thou have a garden of palm trees and grapes and thou cause forth gushing rivers to gush forth in its midst; or thou make the heaven to fall on us, as thou hast given out, in pieces; or thou bring God and the angels in our presence to vouch for thee; or thou have a house of gold; or thou mount up into heaven; nor will we believe in thy mounting up, till thou send down to us a book which we may

read.' Say: Praise be to my Lord! Am I more than a mortal, an apostle?" (xvii: 90-94). The unbelievers often demanded such gross and material signs which were opposed to the spiritual conception of faith. For one who thinks, such demands are a clear proof of the numerous miracles wrought by the Holy Prophet and the clear signs shown by him. Not being able to refute these, they demanded new and material miracles invented by themselves. In fact, the lustre of the truth of the Holy Prophet had so dazzled their eyes and the constant pouring down upon him of heavenly blessings and assistance had so baffled them that no way of escape had been left to them except to make improper demands. For, it can be easily seen that the acceptance of such demands involved an utter raising of the veil which hung between this world and the next. Almighty God has, no doubt, power to show even such wonders and thus to bring the spiritual world on a level with the material, but His wisdom has not ordained it so from the beginning. It has never happened, for instance, that Almighty God should have raised a whole city from the graves to bear testimony to the truth of a prophet. The Gospels, no doubt, relate such an incident, but if it was not a dream as we have shown in some other issue of this paper, the testimony of the dead raised to life must have been against the claims of Jesus, for it had a contrary effect, and instead of submission, opposition and persecution grew stronger on the part of his adversaries. It should be remembered that those who made such demands, at last became witnesses to the miracles of the Holy Prophet, for it was they who having accepted Islam afterwards spread it in far and distant lands at the risk of their lives. Their testimonies to the signs of the Holy Prophet are also recorded in the books on traditions. Supposing for the sake of argument that they denied the miracles of our Holy Prophet at first, is it not true that they later on saw their errors and repenting of their denial accepted the Holy Prophet? It is their testimony borne when they were not actuated by feelings of hostility that really carries any weight, for they themselves confessed the falsity of their first opinion relating to the denial of miracles.

It is important to bear in mind that the Holy Quran is itself the grandest miracle wrought in the world. Moreover, it is not a miracle which was witnessed only by a few people or a single generation and then lost its force by becoming a story of the past

It is a living miracle, a miracle for all times and all people. In the first place, the sign of punishment which the unbelievers saw with their eyes at that time, is apparent to us in all its glory and can be witnessed by us with the same certainty, for the facts on which it is based are as certain as any fact can possibly be, and not even an opponent can deny them. The basis of this miracle is the undeniable fact that it was demanded at a time when the Holy Prophet with a few companions was suffering the severest persecutions and trials at the hands of his opponents on account of his preaching the doctrine of unity at Mecca. In those days Islam was so weak and defenceless that there was not the least hope that it would outlive the insurmountable difficulties which it had to face. At that time the unbelievers used to say tauntingly to the Muslims how was it, if they had God with them as they asserted, that they were suffering all sorts of troubles and difficulties at their hands and why the God in whom they had their trust did not assist them. In patience had the Muslims to listen to their scoffs, when, inflicting the cruellest tortures upon them, the unbelievers said that they would soon be annihilated and their religion extirpated from the face of the earth, and that if God was on their side why did He not bring the punishment, which He had promised, on the heads of their persecutors. Whatever was asserted in the Holy Quran during this period of the weakness of Islam, when it was, as the circumstances at that time showed, about to be blotted out, is another fact which makes us realise the grandeur of this sign. Such was the critical state in which the Holy Prophet and his companions were at the time that their lives [illegible] in danger every moment, and their eyes witnessed scenes of failures and bafflement on all sides. In this critical state of affairs every demand of the unbelievers for a sign of punishment was met with the determined response that the sign of the triumph of Islam and the vanquishment of the unbelievers would certainly be manifested. They were told that Islam which was trampled under feet like a seed at that time, would soon grow into a large tree extending its branches far into the East and the West, and that those who demanded the sign of punishment would be punished with the sword. Clear prophecies were made to the effect that the peninsula of Arabia would be cleared of the unbelievers and unbelief, that it would be subjected to the yoke of the Muslims,

that the Unity of God would be established in such a manner that idolatry would for ever be blotted out from its soil, that in place of the danger and difficulties which the Muslims had, peace and security would be brought to them, that Islam would gain strength and would continue to gain power until it dominated over a large part of the world and made its victories in far and distant lands and that a mighty kingdom would be established. Any one who keeps before his eye these two important facts, *viz.*, what a time of weakness, failures and straitness it was for Islam when the prophecy was made, and how opposed the prophecy was to the apparent circumstances of Islam so much so that its fulfilment appeared to be an impossibility at that time,——any one who bearing these two facts in mind considers with an impartial mind the later history of Islam which is known to friends as well as foes, cannot but be convinced that this grand prophecy came to fulfilment in the clearest manner and inspired an awe into the hearts that witnessed it. The manner in which its fulfilment has been witnessed in distant lands and in the far future, strikes an impartial mind with wonder and he cannot ascribe this mighty power and knowledge but to an Omnipotent and Omniscient Being. The truth of this would be as clear to him as if he had witnessed its fulfilment with his own eyes.

Another miracle of the Holy Quran which is manifest to us is the wonderful transformation brought about in the companions of the Holy Prophet through their following the Holy Quran and living in the company of the Holy Prophet. An impartial student of history must confess that it was a great transformation brought about by a hand no less powerful than that of Almighty God when he sees first the darkness, ignorance and superstition in which the Arabians were involved, and the deeds of evil which they committed before the advent of the Holy Prophet, and witnesses then the entire change which took place and the purity and perfection which attended their morals, their beliefs, their conduct, their practices and their words and deeds. The mighty magnetism of the Holy Prophet had cast a healthy influence upon them which gave them a new life and a new light. In the Holy Quran Almighty God tells us that He found them dead and breathed life into them, that He found them standing on the fearful brink of the bottomless pit and saved them, that He found them sick and healed them, and that He found them in darkness

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and gave them light. The Holy Quran has given us first the horrible picture of the Arab society as it was before the appearance of the Holy Prophet, and has described then the pure lives which they led after Islam had done its work among them, so that every reader of it may know with certainty that this wonderful transformation was a grand miracle which is manifest even to-day.

A third miracle of the Holy Quran which we witness even now as eye-witnesses, consists in the truths and beauties and the subtle points of faith of which it is full, as well as its eloquent diction and elegant style which are not only, unsurpassed, but the like of which no human genius can produce, and this is a challenge which stands unanswered to this day. Through the thirteen centuries that have elapsed since the birth of Islam, no one has dared to answer its forcible assertion that even if the whole world were gathered together, the like of the Holy Quran could not be produced. This silence on the part of its opponents, is a conclusive proof that human faculties are not able to make its like. Nay, the sum of mortal efforts cannot produce even a single excellence out of the innumerable excellences of the Holy Quran. For instance, one of the excellences of the Holy Quran is that it comprises all sorts of religious truths, and there is not a single truth of this class of which the Holy Quran may be devoid. No other book can be pointed out which should be able to make such an assertion.

A fourth living miracle of the Holy Quran is its marvellous spiritual efficacy which is witnessed in every age. Those who follow it find an acceptance in the sight of God and are granted the blessings of Divine revelations. Almighty God listens to their prayers, and mercifully and graciously favors them with a reply. He informs them of some of the deep secrets of the future like prophets, and gives them a distinction from the rest of the world by making them the recipients of His assistance and support. This is a sign which has hitherto distinguished the followers of the Holy Prophet from the followers of other religions, which is clearly witnessed at the present time and which will continue to be witnessed among them to the day of judgment. Among the Muhammadans there are, (and there always have been), men whom Almighty God grants His assistance, favor with true inspirations and dreams, gives glad tidings and informs of the secrets of the future. In short, the miracles of our Holy Prophet were not only witnessed by the Arabians, but have been witnessed by all subsequent generations and are being witnessed even now.